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ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is prepared in pursuance of paragraphs 16 and 17 of General Assembly resolution 49/146 of 23 December 1994 with a view to supplementing the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1995 (E/1995/111 and Add.1).

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

A. Economic and Social Council

2. At its substantive session of 1995, the Economic and Social Council discussed the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (resolution 49/146, annex) and declared that all forms of racism or racial discrimination, whether institutionalized or resulting from official doctrines of racial superiority or exclusivity, such as "ethnic cleansing", were among the most serious violations of human rights in the contemporary world and must be combated by all possible means.

3. In its resolution 1995/59 of 28 July 1995, the Council, inter alia, took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the Programme of Action, requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the necessary financial resources were provided for the implementation of the activities of the Third Decade during the bienniums 1994-1995 and 1996-1997 and recommended that the activities mentioned in the plan of activities to be carried out during the first third of the Third Decade (1994-1997), as set out in the previous report of the Secretary-General (E/1994/97), should be implemented.

4. Further, the Council invited the Secretary-General to do his utmost to establish a focal point within the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, which would be responsible for reviewing information concerning specific recommendations on activities to be undertaken.

B. Joint meeting of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

5. A joint meeting between the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, with the participation of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, was organized on 8 August 1995 in view of the crucial role they play in combating racial discrimination and racism and for the purpose of reinforcing their actions and

cooperation within the framework of the Third Decade. The following points were discussed at the meeting:

(a) The role of the Committee and the Subcommission in the Third Decade;

(b) Preparation for the world conference against racism, racial and ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and other related contemporary forms of intolerance;

(c) Concrete proposals to combat racism and racial discrimination;

(d) Proposals for future steps on the cooperation between the two bodies.

6. The Committee and the Subcommission issued a joint statement in which they stated that they were meeting jointly to assess the possibilities of closer cooperation in the struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other contemporary forms of related intolerance, and were aware of the roles of the two bodies in the field of prevention, early warning and urgent procedures in situations involving massive violations of human rights. They were appalled by continuing reports of massive and gross violations of human rights in various regions of the world, including genocide and "ethnic cleansing", which were fuelled by policies of racial or ethnic discrimination and antagonism, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, and welcomed the establishment of two ad hoc international criminal tribunals. They declared their strong determination to mobilize their efforts to eliminate, wherever it existed, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; reiterated their absolute condemnation of the massive violations of human rights, in particular, genocide and the spreading practice of "ethnic cleansing", occurring in certain regions of the world and mainly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, and drew attention to the consequences on human rights and on the fate of large populations of the central role played in that regard by policies and practices of racial, xenophobic, ethnic and other related forms of discrimination. They continued to call for firm and urgent measures by the United Nations and the international community to put an end to these violations, to continue to fight policies and practices of racial discrimination, to help save human lives, to stop "ethnic cleansing", to help the return of refugees voluntarily and safely to their homes and to find just political solutions to existing racial, ethnic and related conflicts. They expressed their conviction that all perpetrators of massive violations of human rights must be brought to justice. Accordingly, the two bodies welcomed the establishment of the two current ad hoc international criminal tribunals and called upon the international community to give the tribunals all possible support, including making necessary changes to national laws. They called for the speedy establishment of a permanent international criminal court that would prosecute perpetrators of massive violations of human rights, including perpetrators of egregious acts of racial discrimination. They reminded all Governments of their obligation to ensure to all those under their jurisdiction, without any discrimination, security and peaceful coexistence between the different communities; and called upon the international community to respond compassionately and speedily to the needs of people displaced as a result of policies of racial and ethnic discrimination and to encourage States to receive generously as many of those displaced people as possible.

C. World conference against racism, racial and ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and other related contemporary forms of intolerance

7. In its decision 1995/294 of 25 July 1995, the Council approved the Commission's recommendation to the General Assembly to consider at its fiftieth session the possibility of convening a world conference against racism, racial and ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and other related contemporary forms of intolerance. 1/

D. Status of the Trust Fund for the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination

8. Despite the commitments made by the international community, especially at the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, at which the rapid and complete elimination of all forms of racism and racial discrimination was declared to be a priority task of the international community, contributions to the Trust Fund for the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination has remained below the levels hoped for. It is therefore certain that, unless a supplementary financing effort is made, very few of the activities planned for the 1994-1997 period will be carried out. It is important to note that contributors can allocate their contributions to whatever particular activities they deem especially worthy of interest within the context of the effort to combat racism and racial discrimination.

9. It may be worthwhile mentioning that the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1995/59 strongly appealed to all Governments, organizations and individuals in a position to do so to contribute generously to the Trust Fund, and to that end requested the Secretary-General to continue to undertake appropriate contacts and initiatives to encourage contributions.

10. The status of the Trust Fund as at 31 August 1995 is set out in the table below.

(United States dollars)

A. Statement of income and expenditure for the 20-month period of the biennium 1994-1995 ended 31 August 1995

Income	
Pledge contributions	19 931
Interest income	3 893
Miscellaneous	4 401
Total income	28 225

Expenditure	
Programme support costs	(541)
Total expenditure	(541)
Excess of income over expenditure	28 766

B. Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 August 1995

Assets	
Cash	64 903
Accounts receivable	837
Total assets	65 740
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Liabilities	
Fund balance	
Balance available at 1 January 1994	36 974
Add: excess of income over expenditure	28 766
Balance available at 31 August 1995	65 740
Total liabilities and fund balance	65 740

III. ACTIVITIES BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

11. The Subcommittee on Racism, Racial Discrimination and Decolonization of the Special Committee of International NGOs on Human Rights in Geneva organized a series of non-governmental organization consultations on racism and education during the forty-seventh session of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities from 8 to 22 August 1995, with the participation of experts of the Subcommission and the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination as discussion leaders of the topics of the consultations.

12. The consultations discussed the following:

(a) Education (in its broadest sense) as a factor of racism and a tool to eliminate it, with a brief introduction on how education sometimes perpetuated racism and the powerful tool it could be to help eradicate it and stressing that while education was an essential factor in the elimination of racism, it could not do it alone;

(b) Racism and the role of religious institutions. This consultation discussed how religion and particularly the religious institutions perpetuated racism, and how they could also be powerful agents for eliminating racism;

(c) The exchange of information and actions planned to strengthen cooperation among non-governmental organizations and other social forces (youth, trade unions, religious movements, media, artists and educators) and with the United Nations.

13. The Subcommittee invited the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to be the keynote speaker at the non-governmental organization conference on racism at 50 years of the United Nations on 16 and 17 October 1995.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 4 (E/1995/23), chap. II, sect. B, decision 1995/104.